

TO: THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY

FROM: FACULTY SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF SENATE ACTIVITIES

This report to the faculty is a forerunner of a Faculty Senate Newsletter planned for next year by the Communications Committee. We have depended this year on the Senator's keeping their "constituencies" informed of Senate actions, but we felt that a year-end summary might be useful to the faculty.

The Senate's first year has been primarily an organizational one. The election of officers, election and appointment of committees, adoption of by-laws, and setting up a workable structure were principal concerns of the Senate. At the first meeting Phil Constans was elected chairperson of the Senate; other officers, elected at the second meeting, were: Hugh Thomason, vice-chairperson; James Sanders, secretary-treasurer; and Joan Krenzin, parliamentarian. Standing committees were elected at the first meeting and at year's end they and four later-appointed ad hoc committees are engaged in numerous studies. Several have presented reports, and other reports are in progress. (A later part of this report will describe the activities of each committee.)

Both the Chairman of the Board of Regents, J. David Cole, and President Dero Downing addressed early meetings of the Senate. President Downing spoke at the first meeting, assuring the body of his personal support and cooperation, and suggesting a number of matters he felt deserving of early Senate consideration. Among these were the tenure policy, grievance procedures, evaluation and recognition of outstanding faculty performance, the faculty regent election procedure, and faculty appointment, retention, and promotion.

Some of these and a number of other matters have been considered by the Senate.

FACULTY CONCERNS SURVEY

In December, faculty members received from Senator Hugh Thomason a questionnaire in which 14 items of faculty concern were listed for priority ranking. These items were the Executive Committee's distillation of a much longer list compiled by the Senate. Professor Thomason received

340 usable responses; the top ten items are listed below in order of priority, with the percentage of respondents who marked each one "very important" or "somewhat important."

1. Faculty salaries	94.1%
2. Promotion and tenure	85.3
3. Teacher load	82.9
4. Professional development	82.9
5. Fringe benefits	82.6
6. University budget priorities	75.3
7. Evaluating the faculty	74.7
8. University planning	61.2
9. Grade inflation	60.0
10. Grievance procedure	59.1

ELECTION OF FACULTY REGENT

One suggestion of President Downing in his opening address to the Senate was that the Senate develop "a more effective plan. . . for conducting the periodic election of the faculty regent in accordance with the statutes." The Senate has done so. A clarification of the statutes on eligibility for the position was sought from the Attorney General; the opinion received by Professor Constans held that administrative personnel are ineligible, and that department heads at Western are considered administrative personnel.

A load reduction for the faculty regent was proposed to President Downing. He rejected the proposal, citing as his reasons: (1) that other faculty members do much committee and other non-teaching work without load reductions; (2) that other Kentucky institutions do not give such a reduction; (3) that other board members are not compensated; and (4) that the student regent could not be given equivalent concessions.

The By-Laws, Amendments, and Elections Committee has presented to the Senate a draft of a proposed election procedure, and the election of a faculty regent will be held early in the fall.

STATEMENTS ON ADMINISTRATOR SELECTION AND REVIEW

The Faculty Senate adopted a Statement on Administrator Selection to be considered for adoption as university administrative policy. Instead of the Senate's proposal, President Downing presented to the Board of Regents a substitute proposal, which the Board adopted.

The Senate also adopted a statement on administrator review, which provides for periodic reviews of the President, the Vice-president for Academic Affairs, college deans, and department heads. The reviews, by secret ballot, will indicate whether faculty members favor or oppose retention of the administrators.

The reviews of department heads will take place in 1978 and every three years thereafter; those of college deans and the Vice-president for Academic Affairs in 1979 and 1980, respectfully, and every three years thereafter. The review of the President is to occur nine months before the expiration of his term of office.

REVIEW OF PERSONNEL FILES

The Senate adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Faculty Status and Welfare that personnel files be organized "to take full advantage of the capabilities of modern data processing" and that each person be sent his personal record at least once each year for updating and verification. The recommendation included a list of what the file should include.

This recommendation of the Senate was accepted by President Downing.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEES

The Constitution of the Senate establishes an Executive Committee and six standing committees, which were elected at the first meeting. In December the Executive Committee expanded the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee and appointed four ad hoc committees to deal with specific areas of concern. These appointments included non-senators. The following summaries list the standing committees first, followed by the ad hoc committees.

The BY-LAWS, AMENDMENTS, AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE has conducted six elections for replacements or alternates for Senators, written four-by-laws, and drawn up rules for the election of the faculty regent.

The FACULTY STATUS AND WELFARE COMMITTEE has five sub-committees.

- (1) The Subcommittee on Salaries has almost completed a study of faculty salaries as functions of rank, college, years of service, and sex, finding averages, distributions, and standard deviations. This study is now being checked and printed.

- (2) The Subcommittee on Tenure, Promotions, and Evaluations has studied and recommended changes in the existing tenure policy; these recommendations are now in the hands of the Senators for consideration at the May 12 meeting. The committee is now undertaking a study of promotions, especially in terms of years of service.
- (3) The Subcommittee on Loads is preparing a report from their study; this should be ready soon.
- (4) The Subcommittee on Personal Development studied the Sabbatical leave program, found it satisfactory, and issued no report.
- (5) The Subcommittee on Benefits has been studying insurance and retirement programs. They have consulted with Representative Jody Richards and are trying to find ways in which such benefits here can be brought into equity with others in the state.

The PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONCERNS COMMITTEE is developing a grievance procedure for faculty members. They have also reviewed past evaluations of faculty by students and administrators and are preparing recommendations for future faculty evaluations.

The INSTITUTIONAL GOALS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE will interpret the Mission Statement from the Council on Public Higher Education in terms of what it will mean for the university.

The FISCAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE is analyzing the current operational budget of the university. The committee has reviewed the requested information made available for it and is studying the expenditures for the year.

The ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE has made grade inflation the major concern for the year. Plans for approaching this campus-wide problem are being considered by the committee.

The COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE (an ad hoc committee) is evaluating the present administrative structure, its growth and functions. The committee is studying the job descriptions of the principal positions within the structure, and developing a means of evaluating the performance of duty of holders of those positions.

The COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATOR SELECTION AND RETENTION (ad hoc) formulated the two proposals discussed above under the heading "Statement on Administrator Selection and Review."

The COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PARKING (ad hoc) surveyed the parking situation and met with Paul Bunch, Assistant Director of Public Safety. Proposals for the solution of the parking problem have been solicited and are being studied. A report will be made to the Faculty Senate in May.

The COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE is currently compiling a Faculty Senate Directory, and planning a newsletter to be published regularly next year.